



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**SIMULATION AND OPTIMIZATION OF THERMOSYPHON SOLAR  
WATER HEATER FOR KUALA LUMPUR CLIMATE USING TRNSYS  
SOFTWARE**

**SEYED HAMIDREZA ZAHEDI.**

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**SIMULATION AND OPTIMIZATION OF THERMOSYPHON SOLAR WATER  
HEATER FOR KUALA LUMPUR CLIMATE USING TRNSYS SOFTWARE**

**By**

**SEYED HAMIDREZA ZAHEDI**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Science**

**April 2005**



### *Special Dedication*

This thesis is dedicated to  
My affectionate parents  
**My beloved sisters: Shilla and Helia**  
For their patient, love and support



**Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in  
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science**

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**April 2005**

**Chairman : Associate Professor Ir. Nor Mariah Adam, PhD**

**Faculty : Engineering**

Solar energy can be utilized for hot water supply in Malaysia but demand is at night and in the early morning. Auxiliary heater can help reduce this mismatch.

The objective of this project is to develop a transient simulation program (TRNSYS) by set the system using suitable parameters for Kuala Lumpur, to determine the optimal system design and the system performance during the year for 150liter/day hot water consumption for five persons.

TRNSYS is a transient system simulation program which is use for thermal analysis of a variety of time dependent systems. The modular nature of TRNSYS permits simulation of a great variety of particular components of a physical system and facilitates the additions to the program of mathematical model which is not included in standard TRNSYS

library. A typical thermosyphon solar domestic hot water (DHW) system can be modeled by connecting thermosyphon collector storage subsystem (Type 45), Typical Meteorological Year (TMY) weather data reader (Type89), radiation processor (Type 16), heating load component (Type 14), integrator (Type 24) and online plotter (Type65).

It was observed that the collector should be tilted at  $\phi + (7^\circ \rightarrow 37^\circ)$  which is faced to south, according to Kuala Lumpur latitude ( $\phi=3.14^\circ$ ). In terms of storage tanks configuration the vertical system has better performance rather than horizontal one. The optimal system designs are:  $N_r=10$ ,  $D_r=5$  mm,  $D_o$ ,  $D_i=15$ mm,  $H_r$  when the  $H_t$  is  $1\text{m}^2$  should be more than 0.8m and the optimum tank height is about 1m. In case of tank volume it is highly depend on the set point (hot water temperature to load), but for most of the cases is between 125-150 liter. The optimum collector area for 150 liter/day consumption is about  $2\text{m}^2$ ; there is no effect in increasing the collector area.

It is concluded that the system without auxiliary water heater can not reach the requirements, if the set point is  $55^\circ\text{C}$ . In most of the month of the year the mean monthly water temperature is more than  $50^\circ\text{C}$ . The auxiliary is needed for cooler months like June, July and November. The auxiliary heating consumption in solar system is about 90% less than the geyser (see Figure5.19).

**Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Master Sains**

**SIMULASI DAN PENGOPTIMUMAN PEMANAS AIR SURIA THERMOSIFON  
BAGI CUACA KUALA LUMPUR DENGAN MENGGUNAKAN PERISIAN  
TRNSYS**

**Oleh**

**SEYED HAMIDREZA ZAHEDI**

**April 2005**

**Pengerusi : Prof. Madya. Ir. Nor Mariah Adam, PhD**

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Tenaga suria boleh di gunakan untuk penjanaan air panas di Malaysia tetapi permintaan adalah tinggi untuk waktu malam dan waktu pagi. Penggunaan pemanas tambahan boleh membantu mengurangkan perbezaan bekalan air panas dengan permintaan.

Objektif kajian adalah untuk membangunkan program TRNSYS dengan menggunakan parameter yang sesuai untuk Kuala Lumpur supaya satu sistem optimum dapat diwujudkan untuk penggunaan sebanyak 150l/hari penggunaan air panas untuk lima orang dan sekali gus prestasi sistem berkenaan.

TRNSYS merupakan satu program sistem simulasi transient yang boleh digunakan untuk menganalisis sistem termal untuk pelbagai sistem bergantung kepada masa. Sifat TRNSYS sebagai sistem bermodular membolehkan simulasi pelbagai komponen sesuatu sistem fizikal dan melicinkan cara menambahkan program model matematik

yang tidak wujud di dalam data TRNSYS. Satu sistem suria termosifon lazim (DHW) boleh dimodelkan dengan menghubungkan sub-sistem penstoran penadah termosifon (Type45), pembaca data cuaca Metrologi Tahunan Lazim (TMY), pemproses radiasi (Type16), komponen beban pemanasan (Type14) dan juga pengkamil (Type24) dan pemplot secara online (Type 65).

Keputusan menunjukkan penadah harus condong pada  $\phi + (7^\circ \rightarrow 37^\circ)$  mengikut latitude Kuala Lumpur ( $\phi=3.14^\circ$ ). Dari segi bentuk tangki penstoran, tangki menegak mempunyai prestasi lebih baik daripada tangki mendatar. Rekabentuk optimum sistem adalah  $N_r=10$ ,  $D_r=5$  mm,  $D_o$ ,  $D_i=15$ mm,  $H_r$  apabila  $H_t$  adalah  $1\text{m}^2$  dan melebihi  $0.8\text{m}$  ketinggian optimum tangki  $1\text{m}$ . Untuk keadaan isipadu tangki bergantung kepada titik ditentukan, (suhu air panas melawan beban), lazimnya 125-150l. Keluasan optimum untuk penggunaan 150l sehari adalah sekitar  $2\text{m}^2$  dan tidak memberi sebarang kesan tambahan kawasan tadahan.

Boleh dirumuskan bahawa sistem tanpa pemanas bantuan tidak dapat memenuhi permintaan jika titik ditentukan adalah  $55^\circ\text{C}$ . Pembantu pemanas diperlukan untuk musim sejuk seperti Jun dan November. Penggunaan pemanas tambahan untuk sistem suria adalah 90% kurang daripada jumlah sistem yang menggunakan elektrik sepenuhnya.

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Finally, I wish to acknowledge the support from my parents throughout my study from the beginning of my education.



I certify that an Examination Committee met on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2005 to conduct the final examination of Seyed Hamidreza Zahedi on his Master of Science thesis entitled "Simulation and optimization of thermosyphon solar water heater for Kuala Lumpur climate using TRNSYS software" in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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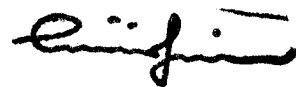
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis based on my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.



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SEYED HAMIDREZA ZAHEDI

Date: 6 JUN 2005

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>AEH</b>	<b>Auxiliary Electric Heater</b>
<b>COP</b>	<b>Coefficient of Performance</b>
<b>CPC</b>	<b>Concentrating Collector</b>
<b>DHW</b>	<b>Domestic Hot Water</b>
<b>ETC</b>	<b>Evacuated Tube Collector</b>
<b>FPC</b>	<b>Flat Plate Collector</b>
<b>ICSSWH</b>	<b>Integrated Collector/Storage Solar Water Heater</b>
<b>KL</b>	<b>Kuala Lumpur</b>
<b>RC</b>	<b>Reverse Circulation</b>
<b>SDWH</b>	<b>Solar Domestic Water Heating</b>
<b>SWH</b>	<b>Solar Water Heater</b>
<b>TMY</b>	<b>Typical Meteorological Year</b>
<b>TRNSYS</b>	<b>Transient System Simulation</b>
<b>TSWH</b>	<b>Thermosyphon Solar Water Heater</b>

## LIST OF SYMBOLS

$A$	Total collector array aperture or gross area (consistent with $F_R(\tau\alpha)$ , $F_R U_L$ )
$A_c$	Collector area
$a_0$	Intercept of collector efficiency vs. $\Delta T/ I_T$ , $F_R(\tau\alpha)_n$
$a_1$	Negative of first order coefficient of the collector efficiency vs. $\Delta T/ I_T$
$a_2$	Negative of second-order coefficient of the collector efficiency vs. $\Delta T/ I_T$
$C_p$	Specific heat of fluid
$D_h$	Diameter of collector header
$D_i, D_o$	Diameter of collector's inlet and outlet connecting pipes
$D_r$	Diameter of collector's riser
$f$	Solar fraction
$F_R U_L$	Combined first and second-order coefficient of collector efficiency vs. $(T_i - T_a)/I_T$
$F_R U_{L/T}$	Negative of second-order coefficient of collector efficiency vs. $(T_i - T_a)/I_T$
$F_R(\tau\alpha)_n$	Intercept of collector efficiency vs. $(T_i - T_a)/I_T$
$F_R U'_L$	Combined first and second-order coefficients of collector efficiency vs. vs. $(T_i - T_a)/I_T$
$g$	Gravitational constant
$G_{test}$	Collector's test flow rate
$H_{aux}$	Height of auxiliary heating element above the bottom of tank
$H_c$	Vertical distance between the outlet and inlet of collector
$H_o$	Vertical distance between outlet of the tank and inlet of the collector
$H_r$	Height of collector's return above the bottom of the tank

$H_t$	Height of the tank
$H_{th}$	Height of auxiliary thermostat above the bottom of the tank
$I_T$	Total incident radiation on a flat surface per unit area
$L_h$	Length of collector's header
$L_i, L_o$	Length of inlet and outlet connecting pipes
$\dot{m}_h$	Mass flow rate of hot stream entering tank
$\dot{m}_L$	Mass flow rate of load
$\dot{m}_i$	Inlet fluid mass flow rate
$\dot{m}_o$	Outlet fluid mass flow rate
$N_{Bl}$	Number of bends in inlet and outlet connecting pipes
$N_r$	Number of parallel collector's riser
$Q_u$	Energy gain of total collector array
$\dot{Q}_{env}$	Rate of energy loss from the tank
$\dot{Q}_{in}$	Rate of energy input to the tank from hot fluid stream
$\dot{Q}_{sup}$	Rate of energy supplied to the load by tank
$\dot{Q}_{aux}$	Required heating rate including efficiency effects
$\dot{Q}_{fluid}$	Rate of heat addition to fluid stream
$\dot{Q}_{loss}$	Rate of thermal losses from heater to environment
$\dot{Q}_{max}$	Maximum heating rate of heater

$T_a$	Ambient temperature
$T_h$	Temperature of hot fluid entering tank
$T_{main}$	Average cold water source temperature
$T_{env}$	Temperature of heater surrounding for heat loss calculation
$T_{load}$	Water temperature delivered to the load
$T_i$	Inlet temperature of fluid to collector
$T_D$	Temperature of water delivered by tank to load
$T_I$	Initial temperature of preheat portion of tank
$T_R$	Temperature of fluid returns to heat source
$T_L$	Temperature of fluid stream entering the tank
$T_{pi}$	Pipe inlet temperature
$T_o$	Fluid outlet temperature
$T_{set}$	Set temperature of heater internal thermostat
$T_{po}$	Pipe outlet temperature
$U_i, U_o$	Heat loss coefficient for inlet and outlet connecting pipes
$(UA)_t$	Overall heat loss coefficient for storage tank
$(UA)_p$	Overall heat loss coefficient for pipes
$V_h$	Volume of fluid entering tank from the heat source over time interval $\Delta t$
$V_L$	Volume of fluid entering tank from load over time interval $Dt$
$V_t$	Volume of the storage tank
$W_c$	Width of the collector
$\beta$	Collector tilt angle
$\gamma$	Collector azimuth angle

$\delta$	Declination angle
$\omega$	Hour angle
$\eta$	Overall collector efficiency
$\rho$	Fluid density
$\rho_g$	Ground reflectance
$\Delta t$	Simulation time step
$\Delta h_i$	Height of the $i^{\text{th}}$ node
$\Delta P_i$	Change in pressure across $i^{\text{th}}$ node
$\gamma$	External control function which has values of 0 or 1
$\theta_z$	Solar zenith angle
$\eta_{\text{htr}}$	Efficiency of auxiliary heater
$\phi$	Latitude

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction to solar energy

The amount of energy available from the sun outside the Earth's atmosphere is approximately  $1367 \text{ W/m}^2$ ; that is nearly the same as a high-powered hair drier for every square meter of sunlight (Duffie and Beckman 1991). Some of the solar energy is absorbed as it passes through the Earth's atmosphere. As a result, on a clear day the amount of solar energy available at the Earth's surface in the direction of the sun is typically  $1000 \text{ W/m}^2$ . At any particular time, the available solar energy is primarily dependent upon how high the sun is in the sky and current cloud conditions. On a monthly or annual basis, the amount of solar energy available also depends upon the location. Furthermore, useable solar energy depends upon available solar energy, weather conditions, the technology used, and its application.

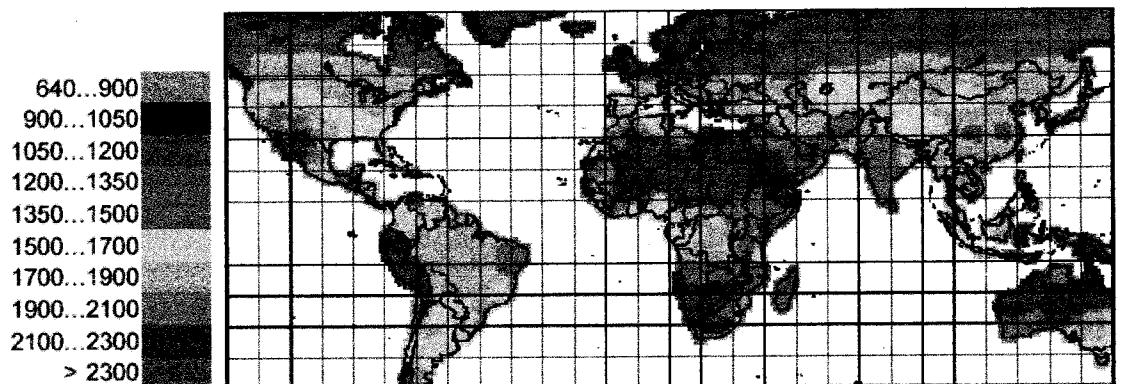


Figure.1.1 Global irradiation in  $\text{kWh/m}^2$  (Geiger 2002)

Solar energy is available abundantly throughout Malaysia. Malaysia has a high solar radiation (See Figure 1.1). The priority to use renewable energy is given to the rural electrification such as installation of Solar PV panels. Villagers at certain remote locations in Sarawak can enjoy the solar-power facility, which can brighten up their nights (The New Straits Times, 3/4/2000). Solar water heaters are quite popular in urban homes and a few hotels. Solar systems also have applications in telecommunications and speed trap cameras.

There are many ways that solar energy can be used effectively. Applications of solar energy use can be grouped into three primary categories: heating/cooling, electricity production, and chemical processes. The most widely used applications are for water and space heating. Ventilation using solar air heating is also growing in popularity. Uptake of electricity producing solar technologies is increasing for the applications photovoltaic (primarily) and concentrating solar thermal-electric technologies. Due to recent advances in solar detoxification technologies for cleaning water and air, these applications hold promise to be competitive with conventional technologies.

The main disadvantage of solar energy is the initial cost. Most types of solar cell require large areas of land to achieve average efficiency. Air pollution and weather can also have a large effect on the efficiency of the cells. The silicon used is also very expensive and the problem of nocturnal down times means solar cells can only generate electricity during the daytime. Solar energy is currently thought to cost about twice as much as traditional sources (coal, oil etc). Obviously, as fossil fuel reserves become depleted, their cost will rise until a point is reached where solar



cells become an economically viable source of energy. When this occurs, massive investment will be able to further increase their efficiency and lower their cost.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

Natural circulation loops (thermosyphons) are those systems which make use of inherent properties of heated fluids and the force of gravity; warmer water like air tends to rise, displacing cooler water, which goes to the bottom of container. These systems appear in many engineering applications, including solar heating and cooling systems, central heating systems, solar water heating and also geothermal power production and cooling of nuclear reactions.

The advantage of natural circulation systems are its simplicity, lower cost, high mechanical reliability (no moving parts, no electronic component), and low operating cost with minimal maintenance. Solar power systems can be a less expensive way to develop power on remote property.

The hot water demand is in the early morning and at nights where at these times there is no radiation. Demand is critical during the June, July and November which is the radiation low. It is important to know how the system performs during these months. It is also necessary to install auxiliary electric heater in the system to reduce this mismatch.

Most of the families in Malaysia are using hot water in evening and nights. A survey among 62 families (Seri Petaling, K.L) was done in March, 2004 to understand when and why they are using hot water. Most of the families answered that they are